

SAM PORRITT
«ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER
(DRAWINGS 2005-2025)»

29.11.2025–15.2.2026

«What are we doing here? And why should we care?» Sam Porritt's (*1979 in London/UK, lives in Zurich/CH) practice is characterised by an interest in conceptual and social issues, which he explores through the act of drawing. Entitled «One Thing After Another (Drawings 2005-2025)», the exhibition at the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen offers the first overview of Porritt's work, which mainly comprises drawings, but also includes sculptures and spatial installations.

Originally coming from sculpture, Porritt has found a medium of immediate expression in drawing. From the outset, Porritt consciously chose to draw with ink and brush and limited himself to these artistic means for ten years: they are direct, revealing, irreversible. At the same time, drawing offers him an artistic economy of means. Stacked flat in a drawer, the drawings take up hardly any space, yet when placed side by side on the wall, they can occupy entire rooms.

Drawing quickly became a daily practice through which Porritt processed everyday observations, personal experiences and current events, as well as personal questions. At the core of his work lies a finely tuned sensitivity to the paradoxes of human existence and an urge to find a visual language for them: reduction and simplicity form an antidote to a complicated world. For Porritt, drawing is much more than a mere representation of reality or visualisation of an idea. It is also an attempt to establish a direct connection between hand, eye and mind. It becomes a field for experimentation, a link between the individual and the environment, an embodiment of pure information. Spontaneity, speed and repetition play a decisive role here: intention meets coincidence, every attempt a collaboration with chance.

The main protagonists of his investigations are the most elementary means of drawing itself: line, colour, form. Porritt repeatedly puts these to the test, varies them and takes them to extremes, suddenly revealing something new in the process: a face crystallises out of an abstract tangle of marks; a looping line transforms into wire mesh; a title adds a surprising layer of meaning to a motif. In a playful, often humorous, but also critical way, Porritt demonstrates how the simplest gestures can weave larger contexts - and how meaning ultimately always forms in the eye of the beholder.

In «One Thing After Another (Drawings 2005-2025)», Porritt makes the ongoing development of these creative processes visible. The title of the exhibition refers to the serial nature of his artistic work, in which the new emerges from, and builds on the previous. Drawing by drawing, Porritt guides us through twenty years of intensive work. In doing so, he opens up diverse, sometimes unexpected connections and lines

of development that transcend a purely chronological reading. In their entirety, they form a testimony.

Beyond its retrospective approach, the exhibition itself functions as a spatial installation. With the simple insertion of a line bisecting the exhibition space, Porritt brings selected, framed works into a deliberate relationship with the overarching cosmos of different series and creative phases: from his first attempts, to black-and-white character heads, to vibrant colour patterns. The wooden ornamental line contrasts with the gestural quality of the drawn line, while the spiral winding around itself echoes formal elements in Porritt's work. The wickerwork is also reflected in the chairs distributed throughout the exhibition space, inviting visitors to linger and engage in slow contemplation.

Like an exposé, Porritt presents a developmental logic within his work on the first wall that visitors encounter, which is also reflected in the structure of the exhibition. The ink drawing *A Map For a Menu* (2007) on the left shows a tangle of marks. Looking closer, recognisable elements emerge from the scribbles, only to be crossed out again. In *Down and Out* (2024) in the centre, we see a vocabulary of forms characteristic of Porritt, which the artist describes with just two decisive brushstrokes: an arrow that repeats itself fractally, as it were; and a looping line that traverses the horizontal plane until it plunges into an imaginary abyss. With *Familial Ties* (2022) on the right, we finally immerse ourselves in the world of colour. On the sheet, worked with several layers of wax crayon, four interconnected flower-like forms fill the entire pictorial space, oscillating between depth and ornamental flatness.

The first room is thus devoted (almost) entirely to black ink drawings on white paper. The oldest ones still bear witness to a search for the threshold between confusion and recognisability. What gives the line its expression? Where is the boundary between abstraction and the identification of a face, a landscape or an object in space? It is this tension between expression and interpretation, between what is meant and what is recognised, between language and meaning, which is inherent in the process of perception and cognition itself and which interests Porritt. Captivated by his impulse to find faces in things, Porritt now begins to draw them freely. Over a period of three years, hundreds of character heads are created. Sometimes they were drawn with an assured hand, at other times a tense or restless one, directly feeding into the attitude of the conjured characters.

Walking back towards the entrance wall, we encounter the reversal of this gestural principle. In drawings such as *Sentiment* (2009) or the series *With the Benefit of Hindsight* (2012) and *Conditions* (2009), Porritt deliberately works against the expressiveness of the brush and prioritises grid motifs, diagrams and repetitions. During this period, he encounters the looping line - a motif that has been a recurring theme in his work ever since. The looping line can be interpreted as a universal gesture of absentmindedness. At the same time, it indicates direction and intentionality in the simplest way possible. For Porritt, it becomes the perfect embodiment of the human urge to keep going,

a belief in progress: «A path across the paper littered with obstacles could be read as an existential journey.»

Porritt also finds a productive metaphor in the motif of the shark fin. Described by the artist as the «nature's arrow», it signals direction, intention - and threat. The diffuse menace of the shark fin finds a correspondence in the sculpture *Carrot Shaped Stick* (2013). The two oversized carrots cast in bronze are held in a precarious balance by their respective weights. At the same time, Porritt demonstrates the false dichotomy of the well-known behavioral method, by merging them into one and the same object.

Wordplay, linguistic jokes and visual puzzles characterise the second room of the exhibition, for which Porritt has selected so-called «exceptions to the rule». These are works in which the artist breaks out of the media stringency of ink drawing, ventures into graphic experiments or integrates language directly into the drawing. The titles are also particularly significant here: with drawings such as *Echo Chamber* (2020), *Prosperity and Its Friends* (2019) and the sculpture *Bullied Moon* (2018), Porritt creates subversive commentaries on specific socio-political dynamics and conditions.

In contrast to the rather minimalist nature of the first two rooms, colour dominates the last exhibition space. In his most recent drawings - lush sheets richly coloured with wax crayon - Porritt combines modernist colour theory with a fascination for patterns and optical illusions. On the one hand, these works deal with ornamentation as a central artistic and spiritual achievement that runs through virtually all cultures and finds a particular culmination in Middle and Far Eastern art forms. On the other hand, their visual pull also refers to the manipulability of the human eye. Porritt is just as interested in contemporary economies of attention as he is in the thought experiment of an addictive image: would it be possible to create an image that could captivate and hold the gaze indefinitely? This curious and uncanny idea presupposes the artwork not only as an aesthetic object, but as an active, perhaps even magical object that directly affects the eye and transforms the mind of the viewer.

The exhibition concludes with the kinetic sculpture *Duty of Care* (2020). In slow motion, an eraser moves in a circle, gradually pushing a stack of drawings onto the floor. We can read the work as a metaphor for Porritt's art-making itself: as a search for order that repeatedly surrenders itself to the entropy of its circumstances; as a practice of constant, meditative investigation into the depths of things, without holding back on the occasional joke; as a careful engagement with the great imponderables such as our own inevitable demise.

EVENTS & EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

OPENING

Friday, 28 November 2025, 6 p.m.

GUIDED TOUR ON SUNDAY

Sunday, 15 February 2026, 3 p.m.

GUIDED TOUR ON TUESDAY AND INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

Tuesday, 2 December 2025, 6 p.m.

ART SNACK

Thursday, 11 December 2025, 12.30 p.m.

Short guided tour and snack

Admission: CHF 10/members CHF 7

No registration required

ARTIST TALK WITH SAM PORRITT

Saturday, 17 January 2026, 4 p.m.

ART LUNCH

Thursday, 5 February 2026, 12 p.m.

Guided tour and lunch

Admission: CHF 25/members CHF 22

Registration required via rsvp@k9000.ch

WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOLS CLASSES

From 3 December 2025 to 13 February 2026, we offer workshops in the exhibition. For more information, see www.k9000.ch

PRESS

You can find high-resolution images in the press kit on our website under Info/Press. For further questions, please contact Giovanni Carmine carmine@k9000.ch or Valentina Ehnimb ehnimb@k9000.ch.

SAM PORRITT (*1979 in London/UK) lives and works in Zurich/CH. He studied sculpture at the Chelsea School of Art before completing his postgraduate degree at the Royal Academy Schools, London/UK in 2005. Solo exhibitions (selection): «Plan for the Worst, Hope for the Best» (with Francesco Cagnin), Last Tango, Zurich/CH (2024); «Autoimmune», Lokal-Int, Biel/CH (2023); «Out of Place», Paradise Works, Manchester/UK (2019). Group exhibitions and performances (selection): «Patterns and Order», Villa Bernasconi, Geneva/CH (2022); «Works on Paper from the Collection»/«RESET», Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich/CH (2021); «Annemarie von Matt - widerstehlich», Nidwaldner Museum, Stans/CH & Centre culturel Suisse, Paris/FR (2020); «Tallinn Print Triennial», The Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn/LT (2018). Awards: Nominee David and Yuko Juda Art Foundation Grant (2023), Finalist Swiss Art Awards (2023/2020/2017), Recipient City of Zurich Work Grant. Collections: MONA - Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania/AU; Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich/CH; South London Gallery, London/UK; Swiss National Library, Bern/CH; Kanton and City of Zurich/CH.

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THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME IS MADE POSSIBLE BY RAIFFEISEN.

Tue-Fri 12-6 p.m.

Sat/Sun 11 a.m.-5 p.m.